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World's Finest Educational Building: William W. Cook Legal Research Library Nears Completion as Unit of Law Quadrangle

The Michigan Alumnus

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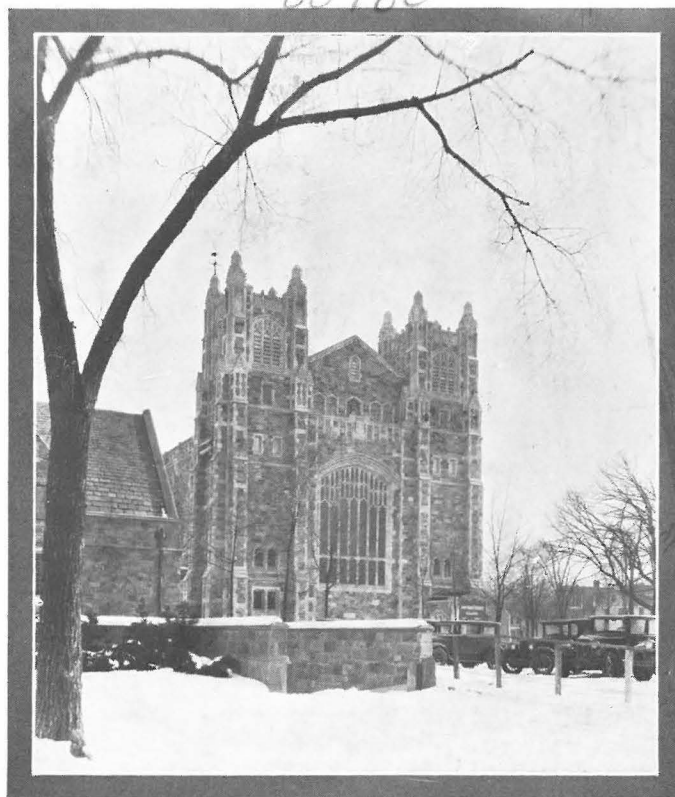
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The Magnificent West Elevation of the Legal
Research Library

Third Triennial of University of Michigan Clubs
Cleveland, Ohio
May 22 and 23, 1931

World's Finest Educational Building

William W. Cook Legal Research Library Nears Completion as Unit of Law Quadrangle

AS the finishing touches are applied, the nearly completed William W. Cook Legal Research Library looms upward impressively from its position at the southern border of the Law Quadrangle.

This firmly buttressed English-Gothic addition to the Cook legal center, facing northward towards the original Lawyers Club unit, South University Avenue and the Campus, impels all who pass to stop and admire. For, from its foundation to the very pinnacles of its ninety-foot towers, the new structure seems to effuse a power and a beauty of rare proportions.

Following the general architectural scheme of the entire quadrangle, this third unit combines all of the artistry of Gothic design with all of the conveniences of modern construction. As it rapidly approaches completion this new edifice, dedicated to research and study of the law, fits appropriately into the magnificent legal "city" which lacks only erection of Hutchins Hall, the classroom building, to become transformed from a dream in the mind of William W. Cook, '80, '82, to a physical reality.

Placed conspicuously on the four towers are seals of the forty-eight states of the Union. On the face of the northwest tower is a large hand-wrought electrical clock which can be seen from any part of the quadrangle and balancing this on the northeast tower is an equally large seal of the University. High arched stained glass windows, upon which are emblazoned the shields and seals of 172 educational institutions located in all parts of the world, lend a tone of dignified solidarity to the entire exterior. Midway between the two north towers is the main entrance to the building, through specially carved stone doorways above which are the inscriptions "Learned and Cultured Lawyers Are Safeguards of the Republic" and "Law Embodies the Wisdom of the Ages—Progress Comes Slowly."

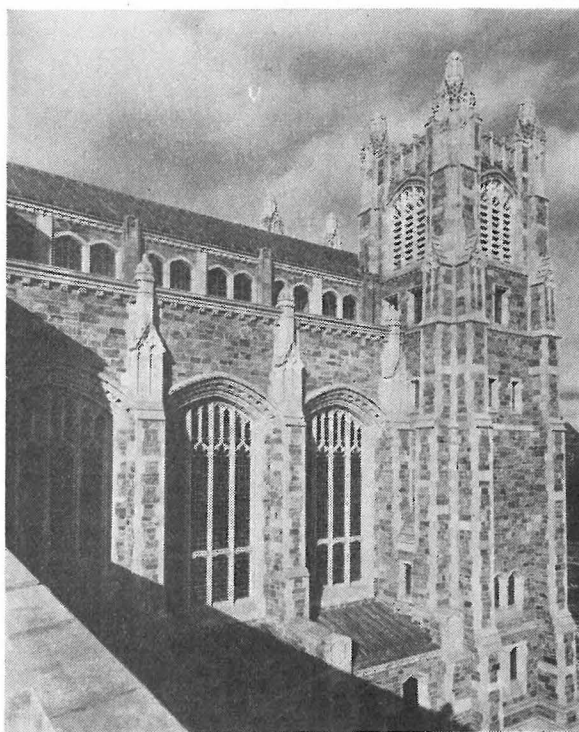
Entering through either doorway, the visitor finds himself in a severely chapel-like vaulted lobby of Gothic simplicity leading to the Main Reading Room or to the ground floor cloak rooms and wash rooms.

Stone carvings in this lobby and in other parts of the building were done by the John Donnelley Company, the foremost concern of its kind in this country.

The Reading Room itself is one of the wonders of the building. Rare wainscoting of an imported English pollard oak borders the lower portions of the fifty-foot walls, which are capped by a panelled roof decorated with colorful medallions and supported with massive beams. The room is effectively lighted by twenty-two hand-fashioned candelabra-chandeliers of a silver hue

with a slightly evident gold trimming, and by lamps placed conveniently at the study tables. Indirectly lighted exhibition cases for displays of rare and interesting publications and manuscripts are provided in the room and in the alcoves.

The peaceful grandeur of a church is created in this tremendous room by the heavily beamed ceiling, the long stained glass windows through which pours the sunlight, and the muffling of footsteps accomplished by the cork flooring which has been laid here and throughout the building. Nothing has been spared in the endeavor to make this and all other sections of the structure as beautiful as possible. Even the specially wrought metal hand-rails leading up into the

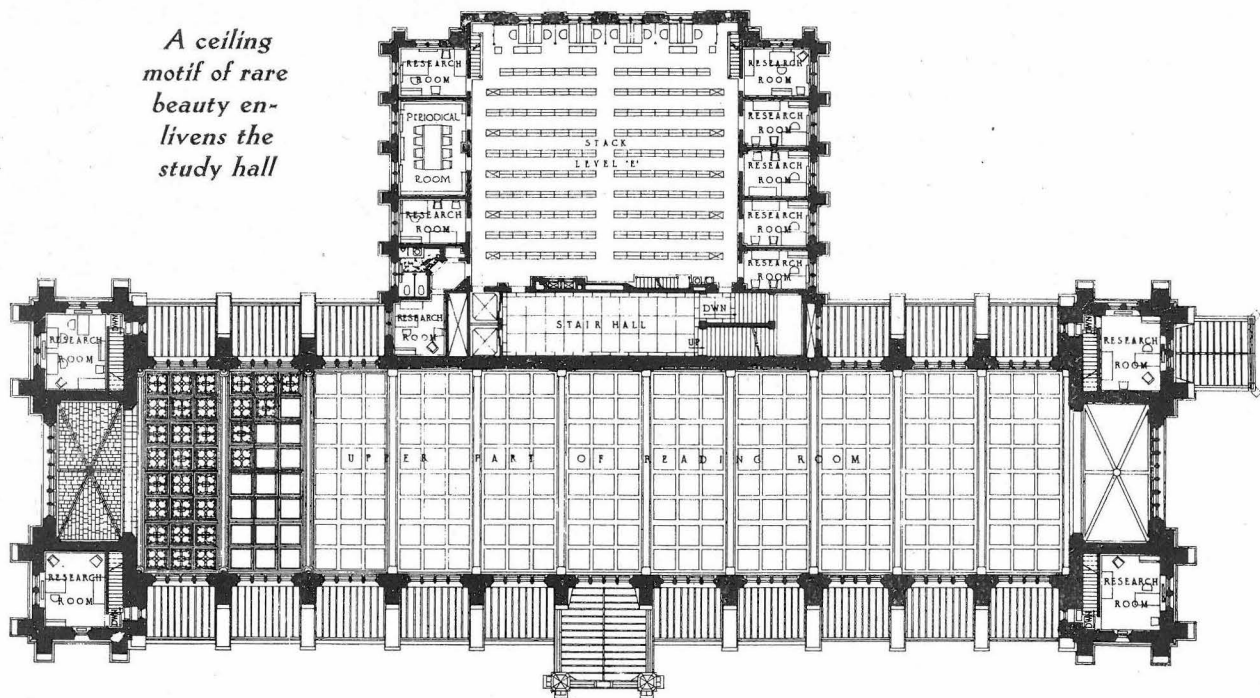


ONE OF THE GREAT CORNER TOWERS

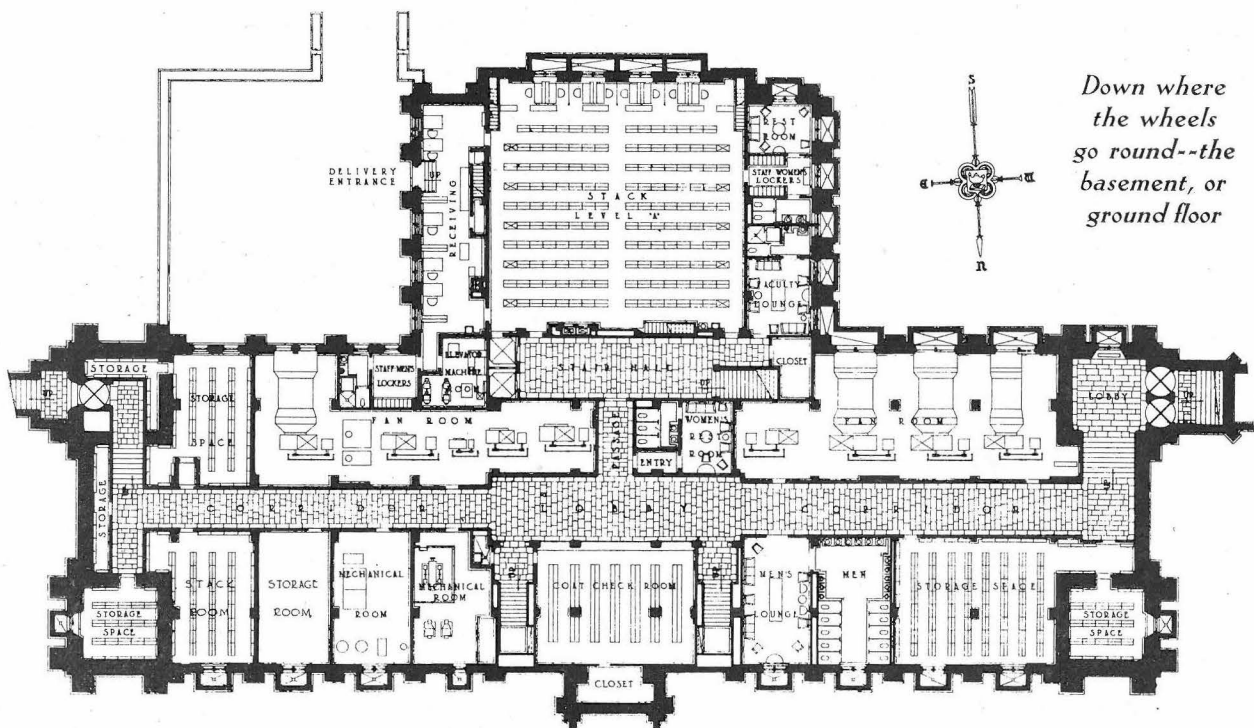
Reading Room are in themselves works of art.

In the alcoves skirting this central room are bookcases and tables of the same pollard oak. Plaster beams on the alcove ceilings have been covered with a specially painted canvas which matches to perfection the wainscoting and cabinet work of genuine oak. All of the windows are blended harmoniously with colorful college and university seals. Of unusual interest is the group of seals in the windows at the east end of the room representing historic old Oxford University and its six equally renowned colleges, Jesus, Christ Church, Queens, Brasenose and Balliol. The Reading Room is two hundred and two feet long and forty-five feet wide and will have a seating capacity of four hundred and fifty.

For the convenience of those who may be disturbed by conversation in the Reading Room, consultation



Details of Basement and Upper Floors of the
Legal Research Library

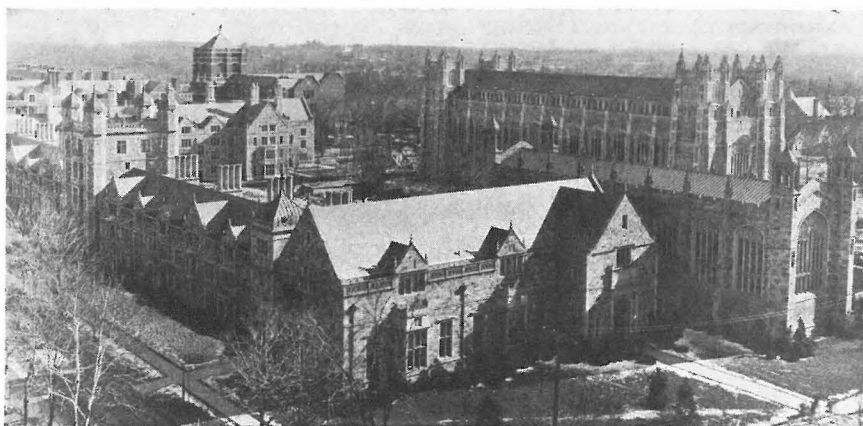


rooms, containing eight chairs each, have been situated in the towers. Students who want to work together will have the use of four of these consultation chambers immediately, with four more available when Hutchins Hall is completed.

THE principal purpose of the building, legal research, is most adequately cared for on the top floor where thirty-two research rooms, a duplicate library and two special libraries are available for delving faculty members and special investigators. The duplicate library, with a capacity of almost 13,000 volumes, will house any books desired for individual research projects which are undertaken.

One of the two special libraries will be the new home of Mr. Cook's private library which, at present, is at his former residence in New York. These books are of general cultural interest rather than of limited legal application. The contents of the other special library have not yet been selected by Hobart R. Coffey, '22l, J.D. '24, Professor of Law and Law Librarian, who will be in charge of the Legal Research Library. Books for the research workers may be carried from any of the six levels of stacks by dumb-waiters.

At a convenient location near the center of the building are two spacious "buzzer-operated" passenger elevators running from the basement to the top floor. Twelve additional research rooms are scattered



THE QUADRANGLE AS VIEWED FROM MICHIGAN UNION TOWER

throughout the building. For extreme privacy, faculty members will have the use of forty-eight carrels built near the stacks. Study in these carrels will be far less difficult than in other libraries because of the fact that even the floors of the stacks are cork-covered, insuring absolute quiet.

THE stacks themselves are of a recent and most useful design. In every second section is a shelf which may be drawn out and used as a temporary resting place for volumes which are being examined. Ventilators are built into the ends of the stacks to eliminate any possible waste of space. A few of the rows of stacks have been closed off by strong, metal screened doorways, entrance to which may be effected only with

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World's Finest Educational Building

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the master key which is in the possession of the Librarian. These stacks will house unusually valuable books and pamphlets which are frequently in use and which therefore should be made readily accessible, although well guarded against theft at the same time.

SIX levels of stacks have an absolute capacity of approximately 205,000 volumes. This, with the addition of the space available in special stacks in the basement, in the Main Reading Room and on the research floor, brings the total capacity of the library well up beyond 275,000, although permanent possession of more than about 200,000 volumes would lead to crowding and rearrangements on the shelves. When the complete Law School Library is moved into its new home in June, about 90,000 volumes will be placed in the stacks for immediate use while new writings in many languages, which are constantly being ordered under the supervision of Professor Coffey, will supplement the present collection very soon.

Among the other physical features of the interior are unique, hand-wrought railings along all of the stairways, bits of ornamental grillwork and carefully selected furnishings in excellent taste which combine qualities of beauty and practicability. Floors of the research section are of a terrazzo which is poured between borders of an unusually beautiful Levanto marble which has been imported from Italy. Wainscoting on the top floor and on the stairways is of a Hautville marble which has been brought from France. An American marble from Missouri, known as Napoleon grey, is used also in several parts of the building. The library is fully equipped with telephones.

Expert craftsmen, most of whom were recently employed on the Rockefeller Church in New York, were brought to Ann Arbor to do the carving and decorating. The decorators, whose most significant work was the painting of the vast ceiling in the Reading Room, were from the Barnet Phillips firm of New York. Irving and Casson of Boston built the wood panels and cabinets which were sent here in sections for installation in the Reading Room and the alcoves. Construction was by James Baird Company, the building concern which now shifts its activity to construction of Hutchins Hall.

ACCORDING to the original plans the Legal Research Library was to be the last unit of the Quadrangle to be constructed for some time but the present unemployment situation has prompted the executors of Mr. Cook's estate to undertake immediate construction of the classroom building at the corner of Monroe and State Streets which is the southwest corner of the Quadrangle. With workmen already on the scene, the

Hutchins Hall addition will be ready for the opening of the fall semester in 1932, thus rounding out the complete new legal unit on the Campus.

Although William W. Cook's benefaction to his Alma Mater is represented only partially in the Gothic Law Quadrangle it is represented artistically and most usefully in this monument to the Law. Probably no institution in this country or abroad possesses a more adequate and more magnificent center where students, professors, practicing attorneys and

jurists may gather to supplement their knowledge and undertake their research of the legal machinery. Improvement of legal methods, one of Mr. Cook's most favored ideals, must result inevitably from erection of such units as that which he has given to the University of Michigan. An inscription above the inside entrance of the Reading Room reads: "Jurisprudence is a Milestone Marking the Progress of a Nation." Certainly the Cook Law Quadrangle is a milestone marking the progress of this great institution.

